

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Original) A tape measure having a case, in which is a spooled concave measuring blade, the blade being extendable from the case via an opening, the tape measure having a spring which acts to urge the blade back into its spooled configuration, and an end piece at the free end of the measuring blade, wherein the tape measure further comprises at least one aperture in the casing to allow direct access to the spooled blade.

2. (Original) A tape measure according to claim 1, wherein there are at least two apertures in the casing.

3. (Currently Amended) A tape measure according to ~~either claim 1 or claim 2~~ claim 1, wherein the at least one aperture is provided in the edge of the case.

4. (Original) A tape measure according to claim 3, wherein the length of the at least one aperture, the length being measured around the circumference of the spooled blade, is at least 3 cm.

5. (Original) A tape measure according to claim 3, wherein the length of the at least one aperture is at least 5 cm.

6. (Currently Amended) A tape measure according to ~~either claim 4 or claim 5~~ claim 4, wherein the portions of the casing which have apertures in follow the circumference of the spool on which the measuring end is spooled.

7. (Currently Amended) A tape measure according to ~~any one of claims 4 to 6~~ claim 4, wherein the width of the at least one aperture is less than the width of the spooled measuring blade.

8. (Currently Amended) A tape measure according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, further comprising means for driving at least one of the discs or the spool on which the measuring blade is spooled in a direction to extend the blade from the casing.

9. (Original) A tape measure according to claim 8, wherein the driving means are an extension of one of the discs such that it extends through an aperture in the case.

10. (Original) A tape measure according to claim 8, wherein the driving means comprise a thumbwheel mounted in the case, which thumbwheel can drive one of the discs or the spool on which the blade is spooled.

11. (Original) A tape measure according to claim 10, wherein the thumbwheel is located such that it is always linked to the disc or the spool.

12. (Original) A tape measure according to claim 10, wherein the thumbwheel is movable between two positions, in one of which it is linked to the disc or the spool, and in the other of which it is not linked to the disc or the spool.

13. (Original) A tape measure according to claim 12, wherein the thumbwheel is biased to the non-linked position.

14. (Currently Amended) A tape measure according to ~~any one of claims 10 to 13~~ claim 10, wherein the thumbwheel directly engages the disc or the spool.

15. (Currently Amended) A tape measure according to ~~any one of claims 10 to 13~~ claim 10, wherein the thumbwheel engages the disc or the spool by way of one or more intermediate gear cogs.